

LATHAM & WATKINS LLP
Daniel P. Brunton (Bar No. 218615)
Email: daniel.brunton@lw.com
12670 High Bluff Drive
San Diego, CA 92130
Tel.: (858) 523-5400
Fax: (858) 523-5450

Benjamin J. Hanelin (Bar No. 237595)
Email: benjamin.hanelin@lw.com
355 South Grand Avenue, Suite 100
Los Angeles, California 90071-1560
Tel.: (213) 485-1234
Fax: (213) 891-8763

Janice M. Schneider (*Pro Hac Vice*)
Email: janice.schneider@lw.com
Devin M. O'Connor (*Pro Hac Vice*)
Email: devin.o'connor@lw.com
555 Eleventh Street, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, D.C. 20004-1304
Tel.: (202) 637-2200
Fax: (202) 637-2201

*Attorneys for Intervenor-Defendant
Sable Offshore Corp.*

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
WESTERN DIVISION**

CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

DOUG BURGUM, et al.,

Defendants,

and

SABLE OFFSHORE CORP.,

Intervenor-Defendant.

CASE NO. 2:24-cv-05459-MWC-MAA

**SABLE OFFSHORE CORP.'S
ANSWER TO FIRST
SUPPLEMENTAL AND AMENDED
COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY
AND OTHER RELIEF**

Judge: Hon. Michelle Williams Court
Courtroom: 6A

Intervenor-Defendant Sable Offshore Corp. (“Sable”) hereby answers Plaintiffs’ First Supplemental and Amended Complaint (Dkt. #38-2). Sable denies every allegation in Plaintiffs’ First Supplemental and Amended Complaint not expressly admitted in this Answer and specifically denies that Defendants violated the Administrative Procedure Act (“APA”), Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (“OCSLA”), and National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”).

Introduction

1. Paragraph 1 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response. To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph 1.

2. Sable avers that oil and gas production from the Santa Ynez Unit is currently shut-in due to an incident associated with the onshore Plains All American Pipeline. Sable lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the remaining assertions in Paragraph 2, and, on that basis, denies the same.

3. Sable admits that the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (“BSEE”) authorized extensions relating to Santa Ynez Unit leases annually since 2015 and that BSEE approved the most recent extension on November 14, 2023. Sable lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the remaining assertions in Paragraph 3, and, on that basis, denies the same.

4. Paragraph 4 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response. To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph 4.

5. Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph 5.

6. Paragraph 6 contains Plaintiffs’ characterization of a statute and regulation, and Paragraph 6 sets forth a legal conclusion, which require no

1 response. To the extent that a response is required, the statute and regulation speak
2 for themselves and are the best evidence of their content, and the allegations of the
3 first and second sentences of Paragraph 6 are otherwise denied. Sable denies the
4 allegations in the third sentence of Paragraph 6.

5 7. Paragraph 7 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
6 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in
7 Paragraph 7.

8 8. Paragraph 8 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
9 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph
10 8.

11 9. Sable admits that it consummated the acquisition of the Santa Ynez
12 Unit leases and associated infrastructure in February 2024, that it submitted
13 applications for permits to modify to BSEE on September 19, 2024 two wells, and
14 that BSEE approved those applications on September 25, 2024. Sable avers that it
15 acquired the Santa Ynez Unit assets from Exxon Mobil Corporation and Mobil
16 Pacific Pipeline Company. Sable denies the remaining allegations in Paragraph 9.

17 10. Paragraph 10 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
18 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph
19 10.

20 11. Paragraph 11 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
21 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph
22 11.

23 12. Paragraph 12 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
24 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph
25 12.

26 13. Paragraph 13 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
27 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph
28

1 13.

2 14. Paragraph 14 characterizes Plaintiffs' lawsuit and requested relief,
3 which requires no response. Sable denies that Plaintiffs are entitled to any relief.

4 15. Paragraph 15 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
5 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph
6 15.

7 **Jurisdiction and Venue**

8 16. Paragraph 16 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
9 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in
10 Paragraph 16.

11 17. Paragraph 17 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
12 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in
13 Paragraph 17.

14 18. Paragraph 18 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
15 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in
16 Paragraph 18.

17 **Parties**

18 **Plaintiffs**

19 19. The allegations in Paragraph 19 pertain to Plaintiff Center for
20 Biological Diversity's ("CBD") description of itself. Sable lacks knowledge or
21 information sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the assertions in Paragraph
22 19, and, on that basis, denies the same.

23 20. The allegations in Paragraph 20 pertain to Plaintiff CBD's description
24 of its Oceans Program. Sable lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form a
25 belief about the truth of the assertions in Paragraph 20, and, on that basis, denies
26 the same.

27 21. The allegations in Paragraph 21 pertain to Plaintiff CBD's description
28

1 of its members' activities. Sable lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form
2 a belief about the truth of the assertions in Paragraph 21, and, on that basis, denies
3 the same.

4 22. The allegations in Paragraph 22 pertain to Plaintiff Wishtoyo
5 Foundation's ("Wishtoyo") description of itself. Sable lacks knowledge or
6 information sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the assertions in Paragraph
7 22, and, on that basis, denies the same.

8 23. The allegations in Paragraph 23 pertain to Plaintiff Wishtoyo's
9 description of its members' interests. Sable lacks knowledge or information
10 sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the assertions in Paragraph 23, and, on
11 that basis, denies the same.

12 24. The allegations in Paragraph 24 pertain to Plaintiff Wishtoyo's
13 description of its members' interests. Sable lacks knowledge or information
14 sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the assertions in Paragraph 24, and, on
15 that basis, denies the same.

16 25. The allegations in Paragraph 25 purport to characterize the risks from
17 oil and gas infrastructure, are vague and ambiguous and, accordingly, no response
18 is required. To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies that the
19 paragraph accurately characterizes the risks from oil and gas infrastructure.

20 26. The allegations in Paragraph 26 purport to characterize the risks from
21 offshore drilling activities, are vague and ambiguous and, accordingly, no response
22 is required. To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies that the
23 paragraph accurately characterizes the risks from offshore drilling activities.

24 27. The allegations in Paragraph 27 are denied.

25 28. The first sentence of Paragraph 28 contains Plaintiffs' characterization
26 of agency approvals, which requires no response. To the extent that a response is
27 required, the approvals speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their
28

1 content. Sable denies the remaining allegations in Paragraph 28.

2 29. The allegations in Paragraph 29 are denied.

3 30. Sable lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief about
4 the truth of the assertions in Paragraph 30, and, on that basis, denies the same.

5 31. The allegations in Paragraph 31 are denied.

6 32. The allegations in Paragraph 32 are denied.

7 33. The allegations in Paragraph 33 are denied.

8 **Defendants**

9 34. Sable admits that Debra Haaland was the Secretary of the U.S.
10 Department of the Interior (“DOI”) at the time Plaintiffs filed their Motion for
11 Leave to File First Supplemental and Amended Complaint (Dkt. 38), and avers that
12 Doug Burgum is the current Secretary of the Interior. The remainder of Paragraph
13 34 contains Plaintiffs’ characterization of Secretary of the Interior’s and the DOI’s
14 roles, which requires no response. To the extent that a response is required, Sable
15 denies the allegations in Paragraph 34.

16 35. Sable admits that the BSEE is a federal agency within DOI. The
17 remainder of Paragraph 35 contains Plaintiffs’ characterization of BSEE’s role,
18 which requires no response. To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies
19 the allegations in Paragraph 35.

20 36. Sable admits that Bruce Hesson is the Regional Director of the Pacific
21 Region of BSEE. The remainder of Paragraph 36 contains Plaintiffs’
22 characterization of Mr. Hesson’s role, which requires no response. To the extent
23 that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph 36.

24 **Statutory Background**

25 **Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act**

26 37. Paragraph 37 contains Plaintiffs’ characterization of a statute and a
27 legal conclusion, which requires no response. To the extent that a response is
28

1 required, the statute speaks for itself and is the best evidence of its content. Sable
2 denies any allegations in Paragraph 37 that are inconsistent with the plain language
3 of the statute.

4 38. Paragraph 38 purports to quote a statute, which requires no response.
5 To the extent that a response is required, the statute speaks for itself and is the best
6 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 38 that are
7 inconsistent with the plain language of the statute.

8 39. Paragraph 39 purports to quote a court opinion and contains legal
9 conclusions, which require no response. To the extent that a response is required,
10 the court's opinion speaks for itself and is the best evidence of its content. Sable
11 denies any allegations in Paragraph 39 that are inconsistent with the plain language
12 of the court's decision.

13 40. Paragraph 40 purports to quote a statute, which requires no response.
14 To the extent that a response is required, the statute speaks for itself and is the best
15 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 40 that are
16 inconsistent with the plain language of the statute.

17 41. Paragraph 41 purports to quote a statute, which requires no response.
18 To the extent that a response is required, the statute speaks for itself and is the best
19 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 41 that are
20 inconsistent with the plain language of the statute.

21 42. Paragraph 42 purports to quote a statute, which requires no response.
22 To the extent that a response is required, the statute speaks for itself and is the best
23 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 42 that are
24 inconsistent with the plain language of the statute.

25 43. Paragraph 43 purports to quote a statute, which requires no response.
26 To the extent that a response is required, the statute speaks for itself and is the best
27 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 43 that are
28

1 inconsistent with the plain language of the statute.

2 44. Paragraph 44 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of regulations and a
3 legal conclusion, which require no response. To the extent that a response is
4 required, the regulations speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their
5 content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 44 that are inconsistent with the
6 plain language of the regulations.

7 45. Paragraph 45 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of regulations and a
8 legal conclusion, which require no response. To the extent that a response is
9 required, the regulations speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their
10 content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 45 that are inconsistent with the
11 plain language of the regulations.

12 46. Paragraph 46 purports to quote a regulation, which requires no
13 response. To the extent that a response is required, the regulation speaks for itself
14 and is the best evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph
15 46 that are inconsistent with the plain language of the regulation.

16 47. Paragraph 47 purports to quote a regulation and a court opinion,
17 which requires no response. To the extent that a response is required, the
18 regulation and court opinion speak for themselves and are the best evidence of
19 their content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 47 that are inconsistent
20 with the plain language of the regulation or court opinion.

21 48. Paragraph 48 purports to quote regulations, which requires no
22 response. To the extent that a response is required, the regulations speak for
23 themselves and are the best evidence of their content. Sable denies any allegations
24 in Paragraph 48 that are inconsistent with the plain language of the regulations.

25 **National Environmental Policy Act**

26 49. Paragraph 49 purports to quote a statute, which requires no response.
27 To the extent that a response is required, the statute speaks for itself and is the best
28

1 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 49 that are
2 inconsistent with the plain language of the statute.

3 50. Paragraph 50 purports to quote a court opinion, which requires no
4 response. To the extent that a response is required, the court opinion speaks for
5 itself and is the best evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in
6 Paragraph 50 that are inconsistent with the plain language of the court opinion.

7 51. Paragraph 51 purports to quote a statute, which requires no response.
8 To the extent that a response is required, the statute speaks for itself and is the best
9 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 51 that are
10 inconsistent with the plain language of the statute.

11 52. Paragraph 52 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of a statute and a
12 legal conclusion, which require no response. To the extent that a response is
13 required, the statute speaks for itself and is the best evidence of its content. Sable
14 denies any allegations in Paragraph 52 that are inconsistent with the plain language
15 of the statute.

16 53. Paragraph 53 and footnote 1 to Paragraph 53 contain Plaintiffs'
17 characterization of regulations and sets forth legal conclusion, including with
18 respect to applicability of regulations, which require no response. To the extent
19 that a response is required, the regulations speak for themselves and are the best
20 evidence of their content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 53 that are
21 inconsistent with the plain language of the regulations.

22 54. Paragraph 54 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of regulations and
23 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response. To the extent that a
24 response is required, the regulations speak for themselves and are the best evidence
25 of their content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 54 that are inconsistent
26 with the plain language of the regulations.

27 55. Sable admits the allegation in Paragraph 55.
28

1 56. The allegations in Paragraph 56 characterize certain categorical
2 exclusions, which speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their content.
3 Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 56 that are inconsistent with the plain
4 language of the categorical exclusions.

5 57. Paragraph 57 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of regulations and
6 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response. To the extent that a
7 response is required, the regulations speak for themselves and are the best evidence
8 of their content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 57 that are inconsistent
9 with the plain language of the regulations.

10 58. Paragraph 58 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of regulations and
11 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response. To the extent that a
12 response is required, the regulations speak for themselves and are the best evidence
13 of their content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 58 that are inconsistent
14 with the plain language of the regulations.

15 59. Paragraph 59 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of regulations and
16 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response. To the extent that a
17 response is required, the regulations speak for themselves and are the best evidence
18 of their content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 59 that are inconsistent
19 with the plain language of the regulations.

20 60. Paragraph 60 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of BSEE's
21 interpretation of its regulations, which requires no response. To the extent that a
22 response is required, the regulations speak for themselves and are the best evidence
23 of their content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 60 that are inconsistent
24 with the plain language of the regulations.

25 61. Paragraph 61 contains Plaintiff's characterization of a statute and sets
26 forth legal conclusions, which require no response. To the extent that a response is
27 required, the statute speaks for itself and is the best evidence of its content. Sable
28

denies any allegations in Paragraph 61 that are inconsistent with the plain language of the statute.

62. Paragraph 62 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of regulations and sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response. To the extent that a response is required, the regulations speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 62 that are inconsistent with the plain language of the regulations.

Administrative Procedure Act

63. Paragraph 63 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of a statute, which requires no response. To the extent that a response is required, the statute speaks for itself and is the best evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 63 that are inconsistent with the plain language of the statute.

64. Paragraph 64 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of a statute, which requires no response. To the extent that a response is required, the statute speaks for itself and is the best evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 64 that are inconsistent with the plain language of the statute.

Factual Background

65. Sable lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the assertions in Paragraph 65, and, on that basis, denies the same.

66. Sable admits the third, fourth, and fifth sentences of Paragraph 66. Sable avers that the leases have been properly extended beyond the initial term. Sable lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the remaining assertions in Paragraph 66, and, on that basis, denies the same.

67. Sable admits that oil and gas production has occurred under the Santa Ynez Unit Leases from Platform Harmony, Platform Heritage, and Platform Hondo. Sable admits that Platform Harmony and Platform Heritage were installed in 1989, and Platform Hondo was installed in 1976. Sable lacks knowledge or

1 information sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the remaining assertions in
2 Paragraph 67, and, on that basis, denies the same.

3 68. The allegations of the first sentence of Paragraph 68 are vague and
4 ambiguous and are denied on that basis. The remaining allegations in Paragraph
5 68 purport to contain Plaintiffs' characterization of ExxonMobil's development
6 plan. The document speaks for itself and is the best evidence of its content. On
7 that basis, Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 68 that are inconsistent with
8 the plain language of the document. Sable admits that first production began in
9 1981 and denies that the production from the Santa Ynez Unit should have ceased
10 by 2016.

11 69. Sable admits that it is the listed owner and operator of Platforms
12 Harmony, Heritage, and Hondo and lessee on all 16 oil and gas leases in the Santa
13 Ynez Unit.

14 70. The allegations in Paragraph 70 are vague and ambiguous and are
15 either denied on that basis, or Sable lacks knowledge or information sufficient to
16 form a belief about the truth of the allegations in Paragraph 70, and, on that basis,
17 denies the same. Sable avers that Sable entered into a purchase and sale agreement
18 for certain assets formerly held by Exxon Mobil Corporation and Mobil Pacific
19 Pipeline Corporation on November 1, 2022 and completed the sale in February
20 2024.

21 71. The allegations in Paragraph 71 purport to characterize some
22 undefined conclusions by unnamed federal regulators regarding an onshore
23 pipeline incident, are vague and ambiguous and, accordingly, no response is
24 required. To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies that the paragraph
25 accurately characterizes conclusions by unnamed federal regulators.

26 72. Sable admits that ExxonMobil did not decommission the Harmony,
27 Heritage, and Hondo platforms. Sable lacks knowledge or information sufficient
28

1 to form a belief about the truth of the remaining assertions in Paragraph 72, and, on
2 that basis, denies the same.

3 73. The allegations in Paragraph 73 purport to characterize written actions
4 taken by ExxonMobil and BSEE which speak for themselves and are the best
5 evidence of their contents. On that basis, Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph
6 73 that are inconsistent with the plain language of the documents.

7 74. Paragraph 74 contains legal conclusions, which require no response.
8 Sable also lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief about the
9 truth of the assertions in Paragraph 74. Accordingly, Sable denies the assertions in
10 Paragraph 74.

11 75. Sable admits that in connection with the purchase agreement in
12 February 2024 Sable acquired the Santa Ynez Unit leases, platforms, offshore and
13 onshore pipelines, and onshore processing facilities. Sable admits that in
14 connection with the purchase agreement Sable entered into a term loan with Exxon
15 Mobil Corporation. Sable denies the remaining allegations in Paragraph 75.

16 76. Paragraph 76 purports to characterize Sable's communications with
17 investors, which require no response. To the extent that a response is required, the
18 unspecified communications speak for themselves and are the best evidence of
19 their content. Sable denies the remaining allegations in Paragraph 76.

20 77. The allegations in Paragraph 77 purport to characterize Sable's plans,
21 are vague and ambiguous and, accordingly, no response is required. To the extent
22 that a response is required, Sable denies that the paragraph accurately characterizes
23 its plans regarding restart.

24 78. Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph 78.

25 79. Sable admits that it submitted applications for permits to modify two
26 already existing wells. The remaining allegations in Paragraph 79 purport to
27 characterize certain well work in the Santa Ynez Unit, are vague and ambiguous
28

1 and, accordingly, no response is required. To the extent that a response is required,
2 Sable denies that the paragraph accurately characterizes well work in the Santa
3 Ynez Unit.

4 80. The allegations in Paragraph 80 purport to characterize BSEE's
5 conclusions, which speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their content.
6 Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 80 that are inconsistent with the plain
7 language, meaning and context of these documents.

8 81. Paragraph 81 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
9 Further, the allegations in Paragraph 81 purport to characterize the content of
10 BSEE's conclusions, which speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their
11 content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 81 that are inconsistent with the
12 plain language, meaning and context of these documents.

13 82. Sable avers that on September 19, 2024, Sable submitted applications
14 for permits to modify ("APMs") existing Well HE-23 and existing Well HE-28.
15 Sable admits that BSEE approved two APMs on September 25, 2024.

16 83. The allegations in the first sentence of Paragraph 83 purport to
17 characterize certain onshore construction work, are vague and ambiguous and,
18 accordingly, no response is required. To the extent that a response is required,
19 Sable denies that the paragraph accurately characterizes the onshore construction
20 work. The allegations in the second, third, and fourth sentences purport to
21 characterize documents issued by the California Coastal Commission, which speak
22 for themselves and are the best evidence of their contents. Sable denies any
23 allegations in the second, third, and fourth sentences of Paragraph 83 that are
24 inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and context of the documents.

25 84. Paragraph 84 purports to characterize Sable's communications with its
26 investors, which requires no response. To the extent that a response is required,
27 the unspecified communications speak for themselves and are the best evidence of
28

1 their content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 84 that are inconsistent
2 with the plain language, meaning and context of the communications.

3 85. The allegations in Paragraph 85 are denied.

4 86. The allegations in Paragraph 86 purport to characterize the risks from
5 lease extensions and well perforation permits, are vague and ambiguous and,
6 accordingly, no response is required. To the extent that a response is required,
7 Sable denies that the paragraph accurately characterizes the risks from the lease
8 extensions and well perforation permits.

9 87. The allegations in Paragraph 87 purport to characterize the risks of
10 crude oil to fish, are vague and ambiguous and, accordingly, no response is
11 required. To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies that the paragraph
12 accurately characterizes the risks of crude oil to fish. The last sentence of
13 Paragraph 87 purports to characterize a document, which is the best evidence of its
14 content. On that basis, Sable denies any allegations in the last sentence of
15 Paragraph 87 that is inconsistent with the plain language of the document.

16 88. The allegations in Paragraph 88 purport to characterize the risks of
17 crude oil to threatened and endangered species are vague and ambiguous, and,
18 accordingly, no response is required. To the extent that a response is required,
19 Sable denies that the paragraph accurately characterizes the risks of crude oil to
20 threatened and endangered species.

21 89. Sable denies the first and third sentences of Paragraph 89. Sable
22 admits that production began at the Santa Ynez Unit in 1981, and the last platforms
23 were installed in 1989.

24 90. Sable denies allegations in the first sentence of Paragraph 90. The
25 allegations in the second sentence of Paragraph 90 are vague and ambiguous and
26 denied on that basis. Sable avers that the Plains All American Pipeline is not in the
27 Santa Ynez Unit. The third sentence of Paragraph 90 purports to characterize an
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1 unidentified document, which speaks for itself and is the best evidence of its
2 content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 90 that are inconsistent with the
3 plain language of the document.

4 91. The allegations in Paragraph 91 purport to characterize unidentified
5 studies, which speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their contents.
6 Sable lacks sufficient information to form a belief as to the truth or accuracy of the
7 allegations in Paragraph 91 and denies them on that basis.

8 92. Paragraph 92 purports to characterize unidentified studies, which
9 speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their contents. Sable lacks
10 sufficient information to form a belief as to the truth or accuracy of the allegations
11 in Paragraph 92 and denies them on that basis.

12 93. The allegations in Paragraph 93 purport to characterize unidentified
13 federal records, which speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their
14 contents. Sable lacks sufficient information and knowledge to form a belief as to
15 the truth or accuracy of the allegations in Paragraph 93 and denies them on that
16 basis.

17 94. The allegations in Paragraph 94 purport to characterize the risks of
18 well stimulation treatments such as hydraulic fracturing and acidizing, and are
19 vague and ambiguous and are denied on that basis. To the extent that a response is
20 required, Sable denies that the paragraph accurately characterizes the risks of well
21 stimulation treatments. The fourth sentence of Paragraph 94 purports to
22 characterize a statement attributed to ExxonMobil. Sable lacks sufficient
23 information to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations in the fourth sentence
24 of Paragraph 94 and denies it on that basis.

25 95. The allegations in the first, third, fourth and fifth sentences of
26 Paragraph 95 purport to characterize air impacts from oil and gas drilling, are
27 vague and ambiguous and, accordingly, no response is required. To the extent that
28

1 a response is required, Sable denies that the paragraph accurately characterizes the
2 air impacts from oil and gas drilling. Further, the second sentence of Paragraph 95
3 purports to quote and characterize a statute, which requires no response. The
4 statute speaks for itself and is the best evidence of its content and is denied on that
5 basis.

6 96. The allegations in Paragraph 96 purport to characterize discharges
7 from oil and gas drilling, are vague and ambiguous and, accordingly, no response
8 is required. To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies that the
9 paragraph accurately characterizes discharges from oil and gas drilling. Further,
10 the second sentence of Paragraph 96 purports to characterize a permit, which is the
11 best evidence of its content and is denied on that basis.

12 97. The allegations in Paragraph 97 purport to characterize the risk of
13 vessel traffic, are vague and ambiguous and, accordingly, no response is required.
14 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies that the paragraph accurately
15 characterizes the risk of vessel traffic, including from oil and gas drilling.

16 98. The allegations in Paragraph 98 purport to characterize the risk of
17 climate change from oil and gas drilling by unnamed scientists, are vague and
18 ambiguous and, accordingly, no response is required. To the extent that a response
19 is required, Sable denies that the paragraph accurately characterizes the risk of
20 climate change.

21 99. The allegations in Paragraph 99 purport to characterize various
22 ExxonMobil applications and BSEE decisions, which speak for themselves and are
23 the best evidence of their contents. To the extent that a response is required, Sable
24 denies any allegations in Paragraph 99 that are inconsistent with the plain
25 language, meaning and context of the documents. Sable admits that the 2023
26 extension was originally set to expire on December 13, 2024. Sable avers that it
27 completed well re-working operations approved by BSEE at Well HE-23 as of
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1 October 9, 2024 and Sable completed well re-working operations approved by
2 BSEE at Well HE-28 as of December 9, 2024. The completed work extends the
3 Santa Ynez Unit leases until December 9, 2025.

4 100. The allegations in Paragraph 100 purport to characterize the content of
5 the BSEE's November 2023 extension, which speaks for itself and is the best
6 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 100 that are
7 inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and context of the document.

8 101. The allegations in Paragraph 101 purport to characterize the content of
9 the BSEE's November 2023 extension, which speaks for itself and is the best
10 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 101 that are
11 inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and context of the document.

12 102. Paragraph 102 contains legal conclusions, which require no response.
13 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph
14 102.

15 103. The allegations in Paragraph 103 purport to characterize the content of
16 the BSEE's November 2023 extension, which speaks for itself and is the best
17 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 103 that are
18 inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and context of the document.

19 104. With respect to the allegations in Paragraph 104, Sable admits that
20 BSEE used a categorical exclusion in connection with the November 2023
21 extension and denies that an environmental impact statement ("EIS") or
22 environmental assessment was required.

23 105. The allegations in Paragraph 105 purport to characterize the content of
24 the BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Review, which speaks for itself and is the best
25 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 105 that are
26 inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and context of the document.

27 106. The allegations in Paragraph 106 purport to characterize the content of
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1 the BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Review, which speaks for itself and is the best
2 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 106 that are
3 inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and context of the document.

4 107. The allegations in Paragraph 107 purport to characterize the content of
5 the BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Review, which speaks for itself and is the best
6 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 107 that are
7 inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and context of the document.

8 108. The allegations in Paragraph 108 purport to characterize the content of
9 the BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Review, which speaks for itself and is the best
10 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 108 that are
11 inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and context of the document.

12 109. The allegations in Paragraph 109 purport to characterize the content of
13 the BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Review, which speaks for itself and is the best
14 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 109 that are
15 inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and context of the document.

16 110. The allegations in Paragraph 110 purport to characterize the content of
17 the BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Review, which speaks for itself and is the best
18 evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 110 that are
19 inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and context of the document.

20 111. Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph 111.

21 112. Sable lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief about
22 the truth of the assertions in Paragraph 112, and, on that basis, denies the same.

23 113. The allegations in Paragraph 113 purport to characterize the content of
24 Sable's applications, which speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their
25 content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 113 that are inconsistent with
26 the plain language, meaning and context of the documents.

27 114. The first, third, and fourth sentences of Paragraph 114 purport to
28

1 characterize the status of the wells and activities associated with well perforation,
2 are vague and ambiguous and, accordingly, no response is required. Sable admits
3 that the Santa Ynez Unit was shut-in in 2015. To the extent that a response is
4 required, Sable denies that these sentences accurately characterize the status of the
5 wells or well perforation activities. The second sentence of Paragraph 114
6 purports to characterize permits issued by BSEE, which speak for themselves and
7 are the best evidence of their content. Sable denies any allegations in the second
8 sentence that are inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and context of the
9 documents.

10 115. Paragraph 115 contains legal conclusions, which require no response.
11 To the extent a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph 115.

12 116. The allegations in Paragraph 116 purport to characterize the content of
13 BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Reviews, which speak for themselves and are the
14 best evidence of their content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 116 that
15 are inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and context of the documents.

16 117. The allegations in Paragraph 117 purport to characterize the content of
17 BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Reviews, which speaks for themselves and are the
18 best evidence of their content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 117 that
19 are inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and context of the documents.

20 118. The allegations in Paragraph 118 purport to characterize the content of
21 the development and production plans, which speak for themselves and are the best
22 evidence of their content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 118 that are
23 inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and context of the documents.

24 119. Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph 119.

25 120. Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph 120.

26 121. The allegations in Paragraph 121 purport to characterize the content of
27 BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Reviews, which speak for themselves and are the
28

1 best evidence of their content. To the extent a response is required, Sable denies
2 any allegations in Paragraph 121 that are inconsistent with the plain language,
3 meaning and context of the documents.

4 122. The allegations in Paragraph 122 purport to characterize the content of
5 BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Reviews, which speak for themselves and are the
6 best evidence of their content. To the extent a response is required, Sable denies
7 any allegations in Paragraph 122 that are inconsistent with the plain language,
8 meaning and context of the documents.

9 123. The allegations in Paragraph 123 purport to characterize the content of
10 BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Reviews, which speak for themselves and are the
11 best evidence of their content. To the extent a response is required, Sable denies
12 any allegations in Paragraph 123 that are inconsistent with the plain language,
13 meaning and context of the documents.

14 124. The allegations in Paragraph 124 purport to characterize the content of
15 BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Reviews, which speak for themselves and are the
16 best evidence of their content. To the extent a response is required, Sable denies
17 any allegations in Paragraph 124 that are inconsistent with the plain language,
18 meaning and context of the documents.

19 125. The allegations in Paragraph 125 purport to characterize the content of
20 BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Reviews, which speak for themselves and are the
21 best evidence of their content. To the extent a response is required, Sable denies
22 any allegations in Paragraph 125 that are inconsistent with the plain language,
23 meaning and context of the documents.

24 126. The allegations in Paragraph 126 purport to characterize the content of
25 BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Reviews, which speak for themselves and are the
26 best evidence of their content. To the extent a response is required, Sable denies
27 any allegations in Paragraph 126 that are inconsistent with the plain language,
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1 meaning and context of the documents.

2 127. The allegations in Paragraph 127 purport to characterize the content of
3 BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Reviews, which speak for themselves and are the
4 best evidence of their content. To the extent a response is required, Sable denies
5 any allegations in Paragraph 127 that are inconsistent with the plain language,
6 meaning and context of the documents.

7 128. The allegations in Paragraph 128 purport to characterize the content of
8 BSEE's Categorical Exclusion Reviews, which speaks for themselves and are the
9 best evidence of their content. To the extent a response is required, Sable denies
10 any allegations in Paragraph 128 that are inconsistent with the plain language,
11 meaning and context of the documents.

12 129. The allegations in Paragraph 129 contain legal conclusions, which do
13 not require a response. To the extent a response is required, Sable denies the
14 allegations in Paragraph 129.

15 130. The allegations in Paragraph 130 purport to characterize NEPA
16 analysis, are vague and ambiguous, contain legal conclusions and, accordingly, no
17 response is required. To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies that
18 the paragraph accurately characterizes NEPA relating to the Santa Ynez Unit.

19 131. The allegations in the first sentence of Paragraph 131 purport to
20 characterize environmental analysis, are vague and ambiguous and, accordingly,
21 no response is required. To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies that
22 the first sentence of Paragraph 131 accurately characterizes environmental analysis
23 of federal oil and gas activities in the Santa Barbara Channel. The allegations in
24 the second and third sentences of Paragraph 131 purport to characterize the content
25 of a 1975 EIS, which speaks for itself and is the best evidence of its content. To
26 the extent that a response is required, Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph
27 131 that are inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and context of the
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1 document.

2 132. Sable admits that development and production plans for the Santa
3 Ynez Unit were prepared in 1982. Sable admits that DOI issued an EIS for the
4 Santa Ynez Unit development and production plans in 1984.

5 133. The allegations in Paragraph 133 purport to characterize the content of
6 BSEE's approvals of permits, which speaks for themselves and are the best
7 evidence of their content. To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies
8 any allegations in Paragraph 133 that are inconsistent with the plain language,
9 meaning and content of the documents.

10 134. The allegations in Paragraph 134 purport to characterize the content of
11 unidentified environmental assessments, which speak for themselves and are the
12 best evidence of their contents. To the extent that a response is required, Sable
13 denies any allegations in Paragraph 134 that are inconsistent with the plain
14 language, meaning and content of the documents.

15 135. The allegations in the first sentence of Paragraph 135 contain legal
16 conclusions, which require no response. To the extent that a response is required,
17 Sable denies the allegations in the first sentence of Paragraph 135. The allegations
18 in the second, third, and fourth sentences of Paragraph 135 purport to characterize
19 the effects of a 2015 oil spill, are vague and ambiguous and, accordingly, no
20 response is required. To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies that
21 the allegations in these sentences accurately characterize the effects of the 2015 oil
22 spill.

23 136. The allegations in Paragraph 136 purport to characterize unidentified
24 information related to the 2015 oil spill, are vague and ambiguous and,
25 accordingly, no response is required. To the extent a response is required Sable
26 denies that Paragraph 136 accurately characterizes the information related to the oil
27 spill or Sable's plans.

1 137. The allegations in Paragraph 137 purport to characterize analysis
2 prepared by Sable, which speaks for itself and is the best evidence of its content.
3 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph
4 137 that are inconsistent with the plain language, meaning and contents of the
5 document.

6 138. The allegations in the first sentence of Paragraph 138 are vague and
7 ambiguous and are denied on that basis. The remaining allegations in Paragraph
8 138 purport to characterize the contents of development plans and environmental
9 analysis, which speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their contents.
10 Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 138 that are inconsistent with the plain
11 language, meaning and context of the documents. Sable denies the allegation in
12 the final sentence of Paragraph 138.

13 139. The allegations in the first sentence of Paragraph 139 are vague and
14 ambiguous and are denied on that basis. The allegations in Paragraph 139 purport
15 to characterize the contents of development and production plans and an
16 unspecified BSEE report, which speak for themselves and are the best evidence of
17 their contents. Sable denies any allegations that are inconsistent with the plain
18 language, meaning and context of these documents.

19 140. The allegations in Paragraph 140 purport to characterize drilling
20 techniques and their relationship to prior unidentified environmental analysis, are
21 vague and ambiguous and, accordingly, no response is required. To the extent that
22 a response is required, Sable denies that the paragraph accurately characterizes the
23 drilling techniques, their relationship to prior environmental analysis or Sable's
24 plans.

25 141. The allegations in the first sentence of Paragraph 141 purport to
26 characterize the content of a federal designation of a National Marine Sanctuary,
27 which speaks for itself and is the best evidence of its contents. Sable denies any
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1 allegations in Paragraph 141 that are inconsistent with the plain language, meaning
2 and context of the designation. The allegations in the second sentence of
3 Paragraph 141 purport to characterize a National Marine Sanctuary, are vague and
4 ambiguous and, accordingly, no response is required. To the extent that a response
5 is required, Sable denies that the sentence accurately characterizes the National
6 Marine Sanctuary. Sable denies Plaintiffs' allegation that "a restart will adversely
7 affect" the cultural and environmental values of the sanctuary.

8 142. The allegations in the first sentence of Paragraph 142 contain legal
9 conclusions, which do not require a response. The allegations in the second
10 sentence of Paragraph 142 purport to characterize contents of a development plan
11 and NEPA documents, which speak for themselves and are the best evidence of
12 their contents. Sable denies any allegations that are inconsistent with the plain
13 language, meaning and context of these documents. Sable lacks sufficient
14 information to form a belief as to the truth of the assertions in the third and fourth
15 sentences of Paragraph 142, and, on that basis, denies the same.

16 143. The allegations in Paragraph 143 purport to characterize the content of
17 prior NEPA documents, which speak for themselves and are the best evidence of
18 their contents. Sable denies any allegations inconsistent with the plain language,
19 meaning and context of the documents.

20 144. The allegations in Paragraph 144 purport to characterize actions taken
21 by the federal government under the Endangered Species Act and NEPA, are
22 vague and ambiguous and, accordingly, no response is required. To the extent that
23 a response is required, Sable denies that the paragraph accurately characterizes
24 actions that may have been taken under the Endangered Species Act and NEPA.

25 145. The first sentence of Paragraph 145 sets forth legal conclusions,
26 which require no response. To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies
27 the allegations in first sentence of Paragraph 145. The second sentence of
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Paragraph 145 purports to characterize Sable's communications with its investors, which requires no response. The unspecified communications speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their content. The remaining allegations in Paragraph 145 are vague and ambiguous and are denied on that basis.

146. Sable lacks information sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the assertions in Paragraph 146, and, on that basis, denies the same.

147. Paragraph 147 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response. To the extent a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph 147.

Claims for Relief

First Claim for Relief

148. Sable incorporates by reference its responses to the allegations in Paragraphs 1 through 147.

149. Paragraph 149 purports to quote a statute, which requires no response. To the extent that a response is required, the statute speaks for itself and is the best evidence of its content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 149 that are inconsistent with the plain language of the statute.

150. Paragraph 150 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of a statute and regulations, which requires no response. To the extent that a response is required, the statute and regulations speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 150 that are inconsistent with the plain language of the statute and regulations.

151. Paragraph 151 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of regulations, which requires no response. To the extent that a response is required, the regulations speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 151 that are inconsistent with the plain language of the regulations.

152. Paragraph 152 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.

1 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in
2 Paragraph 152.

3 153. Paragraph 153 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
4 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in
5 Paragraph 153.

6 **Second Claim for Relief**

7 154. Sable incorporates by reference its responses to the allegations
8 contained in Paragraphs 1 through 153.

9 155. Paragraph 155 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of a statute and
10 regulations, which requires no response. To the extent that a response is required,
11 the statute and regulations speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their
12 content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 155 that are inconsistent with
13 the plain language of the statute and regulations.

14 156. Paragraph 156 sets forth a legal conclusion, which requires no
15 response. To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegation in
16 Paragraph 156.

17 157. Paragraph 157 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
18 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in
19 Paragraph 157.

20 158. Paragraph 158 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
21 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in
22 Paragraph 158.

23 159. Paragraph 159 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
24 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in
25 Paragraph 159.

26 160. Paragraph 160 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
27 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in
28

1 Paragraph 160.

2 161. Paragraph 161 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
3 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in
4 Paragraph 161.

5 **Third Claim For Relief**

6 162. Sable incorporates by reference its responses to the allegations
7 contained in Paragraphs 1 through 161.

8 163. Paragraph 163 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of a statute and
9 regulations, which requires no response. To the extent that a response is required,
10 the statute and regulations speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their
11 content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 163 that are inconsistent with
12 the plain language of the statute and regulations.

13 164. Paragraph 164 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
14 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph
15 164.

16 165. Paragraph 165 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
17 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph
18 165.

19 166. Paragraph 166 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
20 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph
21 166.

22 167. Paragraph 167 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
23 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph
24 167.

25 168. Paragraph 168 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
26 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph
27 168.

1 169. Paragraph 169 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
2 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph
3 169.

4 170. Paragraph 170 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
5 To the extent that a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph
6 170.

7 **Fourth Claim for Relief**

8 171. Sable reincorporates by reference its responses to the allegations
9 contained in Paragraphs 1 through 170.

10 172. Paragraph 172 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of a statute and
11 regulations, which requires no response. To the extent that a response is required,
12 the statute and regulations speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their
13 content. Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 172 that are inconsistent with
14 the plain language of the statute and regulations.

15 173. Paragraph 173 contains Plaintiffs' characterization of a statute and
16 characterization and quotation of regulations, which requires no response. To the
17 extent that a response is required, the statute and regulations speak for themselves
18 and are the best evidence of their contents. Sable denies any allegations in
19 Paragraph 173 that are inconsistent with the plain language of the statute and
20 regulations.

21 174. Paragraph 174 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
22 To the extent a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph 174.

23 175. The allegations in Paragraph 175 purport to characterize NEPA
24 analyses, which speak for themselves and are the best evidence of their contents.
25 Sable denies any allegations in Paragraph 175 that are inconsistent with the plain
26 language, meaning and context of these documents. Paragraph 175 also sets forth
27 legal conclusions, which require no response. To the extent a response is required,
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1 Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph 175.

2 176. Paragraph 176 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
3 To the extent a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph 176.

4 177. Paragraph 177 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
5 To the extent a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph 177.

6 178. Paragraph 178 sets forth legal conclusions, which require no response.
7 To the extent a response is required, Sable denies the allegations in Paragraph 178.

8 Sable denies any allegations in the First Supplemental and Amended
9 Complaint, whether express or implied, that are not expressly admitted, denied or
10 qualified above.

11 **Request for Relief**

12 Sable denies that Plaintiffs are entitled to any relief.

13 **DEFENSES**

14 Sable states that it will rely upon one or more of the following defenses.
15 Sable asserts the following defenses without assuming any burden of proof of such
16 defenses that would otherwise rest on Plaintiffs. Notwithstanding the enumeration
17 of specific defenses set forth below, Sable reserves unto itself all of those defenses
18 set forth in Rule 8(c) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and such other
19 defenses, affirmative and otherwise, as may prove to be applicable, and hereby
20 reserves unto itself all of its rights associated with any such claim or potential
21 claim. Sable reserves the right to amend this Answer if investigation and further
22 information warrant such amendment, and further, to assert any applicable matters
23 of law during the pendency of this action.

24 **First Defense**

25 Plaintiffs lack standing to raise some or all of the claims in the First
26 Supplemental and Amended Complaint.

1 **Second Defense**

2 Plaintiffs fail to state a claim upon which relief can be granted for some or
3 all of the claims in the First Supplemental and Amended Complaint.

4 **Third Defense**

5 Plaintiffs' claims are barred in whole or in part by the doctrine of waiver.

6 **Fourth Defense**

7 Plaintiffs' claims are barred in whole or in part by the doctrine of laches.

8 **Fifth Defense**

9 Plaintiffs' claims are barred in whole or in part under the doctrine of
10 harmless error.

11 **Sixth Defense**

12 Some or all of Plaintiffs' claims are not ripe for review.

13 **Seventh Defense**

14 Plaintiffs' claims are barred in whole or in part under the doctrine of
15 mootness.

16 **RESERVATION**

17 Sable reserves the right to add defenses as may be developed during
18 litigation.

19 * * *

20 Sable respectfully requests that the Court enter judgment in favor of
21 Defendants.

1 Dated: February 13, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

2 LATHAM & WATKINS LLP

3 By: /s/ Daniel P. Brunton

4 Daniel P. Brunton (Bar No. 218615)

Email: daniel.brunton@lw.com

12670 High Bluff Drive

5 San Diego, CA 92130

Tel.: (858) 523-5400

6 Fax: (858) 523-5450

7 Benjamin Hanelin (Bar No. 237595)

Email: benjamin.hanelin@lw.com

8 355 South Grand Avenue, Suite 100

Los Angeles, California 90071-1560

9 Tel.: (213) 485-1234

Fax: (213) 891-8763

10 Janice M. Schneider

11 (*Pro Hac Vice*)

Email: janice.schneider@lw.com

12 Devin M. O'Connor

(*Pro Hac Vice*)

13 Email: devin.o'connor@lw.com

555 Eleventh Street, NW, Suite 1000

14 Washington, D.C. 20004-1304

Tel.: (202) 637-2200

15 Fax: (202) 637-2201

16 *Attorneys for Intervenor-Defendant*
17 *Sable Offshore Corp.*